

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W

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R 170920Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6225

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 3788

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: EDA TO LEAVE JSP?

REF: TOKYO 2144

SUMMARY: RUMORS HAVE IT THAT JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY RIGHT WING LEADER EDA WILL LEAVE PARTY BECAUSE OF ANTAGONISM TOWARD EXTREME LEFT WING THAT DOMINATED RECENT CONVENTION (REFTEL) AS WELL AS TOWARD PARTY LEADERSHIP. ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME TALK OF EDA'S FORMING GROUP TO RUN IN JULY UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, AND CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN MEDIA THAT HE WILL DECIDED IN NEXT FEW DAYS TO ANNOUNCE INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY, FENCE-SITTING IN END MAY PROVE IRRESISTABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOR TWO WEEKS TOKYO PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES HAVE BEEN FULL OF REPORTS OF IMMINENT BOLTING OF SABURO EDA FROM JSP. EDA, 69, IS FORMER PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND LEADER OF JSP RIGHT WING WITH 25-MAN FACTION. EDA LOST
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HIS LOWER HOUSE SEAT IN DECEMBER ELECTION AND, AT JSP'S FEBRUARY CONVENTION (REFTEL), WAS SEVERELY CRITICIZED BY SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION, PARTY'S DOMINANT, ULTRA-LEFT WING, FOR HIS EXTRA-PARTY ACTIVITIES IN "SOCIETY TO THINK ABOUT A NEW JAPAN," CROSS-PARTY GROUPING OF MODERATES. SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION ALSO PREVENTED EDA'S PROPOSAL THAT JSP AIM AT REPLACING LDP WITH CENTER-LEFT COALITION OF

JSP, DSP AND CGP (BUT NOT JCP) FROM BEING CONSIDERED BY CONVENTION'S POLICY COMMITTEE. THESE REBUFFS WERE SAID TO HAVE SET EDA AGAINST BOTH ASSOCIATION AND PARTY LEADERSHIP.

2. RUMORS OF EDA'S DEFECTION FROM PARTY HAVE SUGGESTED THREE POSSIBILITIES: THAT EDA WOULD LEAVE PARTY WITH SEVERAL OF HIS FOLLOWERS TO FORM "NEW SOCIALIST CLUB" AND RUN CANDIDATES IN JULY UPPER HOUSE ELECTION; THAT EDA WOULD ACCEPT NOMINATION BY "SOCIETY TO THINK ABOUT A NEW JAPAN" TO RUN WITH ABOUT TEN OTHER SOCIETY CANDIDATES; AND THAT EDA WOULD LEAVE JSP ALONE (OR WITH TWO OR THREE FOLLOWERS) AND RUN IN ELECTION AS INDEPENDENT IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY. SECOND POSSIBILITY APPEARED PLAUSIBLE WHEN SHIGEYOSHI MATSUMAE, WEALTHY RECTOR OF TOKAI UNIVERSITY AND PRESIDENT OF SOCIETY, REPORTEDLY BEGAN TO ARRANGE BACKING FOR EDA AND POSSIBLE SOCIETY SLATE WITH HIS UNION FRIENDS, NOTABLY IN DENKI ROREN (ELECTRICAL WORKERS). NOTION RECEIVED SHARP SETBACK, HOWEVER, WHEN JSP NAMED MATSUMAE'S SON, TATSURO, AS NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATE. WITH MATSUMAE'S SUPPORT UNDERSTANDABLY GOING TO SON, VERY LITTLE WAS LEFT OVER FOR SLATE OF SOCIETY CANDIDATES, AND SOCIETY ABANDONED IDEA OF ITS OWN SLATE.

3. POSSIBILITY THAT EDA WOULD TAKE LARGE NUMBER OF HIS FACTION MEMBERS WITH HIM ALSO BEING DISCOUNTED SINCE MOST CANDIDATES SEPARATED FROM THEIR JSP-ORIENTED SUPPORT GROUPS, WOULD BE RISKING POLITICAL FUTURES. A
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FEW FACTION MEMBERS (PROBABLY TWO OR THREE) ARE CONSIDERED BOTH SUFFICIENTLY LOYAL TO EDA AND STRONG ENOUGH TO SURVIVE POLITICALLY ON THEIR OWN, HOWEVER, TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY LEAVING PARTY WITH EDA. AS INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY, EDA WOULD HAVE CHANCE OF WINNING AND ALSO OF DRAWING VOTES AWAY FROM OTHER JSP NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATES.

4. TO COUNTER POTENTIAL EDA THREAT BOTH TO JSP'S PRE-ELECTION IMAGE AND ITS ELECTORAL CHANCES, JSP CENTRAL EXECUTIV COMMITTEE AGREED IN MARCH 9 MEETING TO ASK CHAIRMAN NARITA TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE EDA TO STAY IN PARTY. NARITA AUTHORIZED TO PROMISE EDA THAT HIS PROPOSALS FOR COALITION WITH MODERATE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD BE "CONSIDERED" BY POLICY COUNCIL. NARITA-EDA TALKS HELD MARCH 16 ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY. THEY WILL BE FOLLOWED DIRECTLY BY TALKS BETWEEN EDA AND MOTOFUMI MAKIEDA, CHAIRMAN OF SOHYO, JAPAN'S LARGE, LEFT-LEANING LABOR FEDERATION, WHICH IS PRINCIPAL SUPPORT BASE FOR JSP.

5. COMMENT. EDA IS REPORTED TO BE SO ANGERED BY WHAT HE CONSIDERS DELIBERATE ILL TREATMENT BY SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION AND JSP LEADERSHIP THAT IT MAY WELL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PERSUADE HIM TO STAY IN JSP. WHETHER EDA WILL DECIDE TO CROSS RUBICON AND BECOME INDEPENDENT UPPER HOUSE CANDIDATE WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM MATSUMAE AND OTHERS, HOWEVER, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. EDA IS WELL KNOWN FOR SITTING ON FENCE, POSTURE HE MAY BY NOW HAVE FOUND COMFORTABLE. EDA HIMSELF, HAS THUS FAR REMAINED SILENT. THERE IS, NEVERTHELESS, CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN MEDIA THAT HE WILL DECIDE IN NEXT FEW DAYS TO ANNOUNCE INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY, BUT FENCE-SITTING MAY IN END PROVE IRRESTIBLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SOCIALISM, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TOKYO03788
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770092-0542
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770348/aaaabpqb.tel
Line Count: 130
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Message ID: 3d037db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TOKYO 2144
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3072968
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EDA TO LEAVE JSP?
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, JA, (EDA, SABURO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3d037db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009